



**Convention on the Elimination
of All Forms of Discrimination
against Women**

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CONSIDERATION OF REPORTS SUBMITTED BY STATES PARTIES
UNDER ARTICLE 18 OF THE CONVENTION

Initial reports of States parties

GUYANA

INTRODUCTION

1. Guyana became an independent nation in May 1966. During the period 1950 - 1966, women were actively involved in mass movements to remove British Colonialism and provide Guyanese with the mandate to control their own destiny.

2. During that decade and a half, women's role in the political life of the country became manifest and they extended their sphere of interest from social and community work to active participation in the political life of the country.

3. The heightening of women's political consciousness linked the struggle for political independence with awareness of their right to economic and social equality. This awareness led them to recognise that the struggle for their emancipation was linked to the eradication of colonialism.

4. Women's active participation in the struggle for independence in 1966 and Republican status in 1970 earned them recognition of their right to benefit from the economic and social progress which accrued after independence. On assuming independence the Government of Guyana demonstrated tangibly its adherence to the principle of equality of opportunity and economic and social justice for all Guyanese.

5. This adherence to equality is enshrined in the 1980 Constitution of the Co-operative Republic of Guyana, of which Article 40 (1) Chapter III states:

Every person in Guyana is entitled to the basic right to a happy, creative and productive life, free from hunger, disease, ignorance and want. That right includes the fundamental rights and freedoms of the individual, that is to say, the right, whatever his race, place of origin, political opinions, colour, creed or sex, but subject to respect for the rights and freedoms of others and for the public interest, to each and all of the following, namely -

- (a) life, liberty, security of the person and the protection of the law;
- (b) freedom of conscience, of expression and of assembly and association;
and
- (c) protection for the privacy of his home and other property and from
- (d) deprivation of property without compensation.

6. In the immediate post-independence period, the government was faced with major tasks arising from the economic and social injustices inherent in the colonial system.

7. Some of these tasks were related to the re-organization of the economic base of the society particularly in the major productive sectors, such as the sugar and bauxite industries, which were owned by foreign companies and multinational corporations. In addition, there was need to re-organize industrial undertakings, many of which were owned by private entrepreneurs, both local and foreign, to make them more responsive to developmental needs.

8. Changes were also made in the delivery of social services, through the introduction of free education for all from nursery to university level, the provision of free medical services, extended to the rural areas, and a housing programme utilising the co-operative, self-help and self-reliant mechanisms.

9. With the introduction of the new system of Local Democracy in 1980, a new process of decentralisation began. Ten Regional Democratic Councils were established to administer the affairs of the entire country. These were entrusted with the responsibility for planning, monitoring and co-ordinating the regional development programmes in each region.

10. The development programmes of these regions are ultimately co-ordinated by the National State Planning Commission.

11. The Regional System is integrally linked to the National Assembly and other decision-making bodies by the national electoral process. Each region receives an annual budgetary allocation from the Central Government, but has the authority to establish projects to generate additional financial resources.

12. Upon its advent to office the Government declared its adherence to the socialist ideology and placed emphasis on the principle of Co-operativism as the unifying and motivating force for the development of Guyana.

13. Article 16 of 1980 Constitution of the Co-operative Republic of Guyana states:

Co-operativism in practice shall be the dynamic principle of socialist transformation and shall pervade and inform all interrelationships in the society. Co-operativism is rooted in the historical experience of the people, is based on self-reliance, is capable of releasing the productive energies of the people, and is a unifying principle in the total development of the nation.

14. When in 1970, Guyana assumed Republican Status, the Government emphasised its commitment to the principles of non-alignment and national self-reliance.

15. Much emphasis was placed, too, on maximum utilisation of the country's natural resources, particularly its agricultural potential, as a mechanism for ensuring food and nutritional self-sufficiency.

16. With an area of 216,00 square kilometres and population of just under 800,000 people, it was clear to Government and people of Guyana that a developing country such as Guyana, had to utilise its human resources as fully as possible if it was to benefit from political freedom and move to economic independence. It is against this background that women are accorded full opportunity to participate in the political, economic and social life of the country.

17. Guyana as part of a world community which was becoming increasingly aware of practices of discrimination in many areas could not be insulated against inherent prejudices based on class or gender considerations or socio-cultural attitudes which perpetuated the notion that women were inferior to men. However, through a process of continuing education and changes in the general social climate and through political, economic and structural transformations in the country, a more enlightened approach to this age-old problem was gradually induced.

18. Developments in education have facilitated women's ability to function at different levels of the governmental and political administration. Policies which formerly hindered women's advancement in public life were changed and women who had hitherto been limited to the fields of domestic activities, teaching and nursing entered in larger numbers the field of local and central government, trade unions and politics. They also took advantage of new career opportunities in military and para-military institutions established for the defence of the newly independent state.

19. The introduction of free health services increased women's life span and the introduction of the National Insurance Scheme permit more women to reconcile family responsibilities with work and social activities. In return for contributions to this scheme women in the labour force receive sickness, maternity and pension benefits.

20. Inequalities inherent in the colonial legal system were discovered by groups of women whose consciousness of social injustice was increasingly being raised. These were brought to the attention of the relevant authorities and are even now being addressed

in the Equal Rights Bill tabled in the National Assembly.

21. An examination of the steps taken to promote legal equality for women in all spheres of political, economic and social life shows that many changes were made before and during the United Nations Decade for Women (1976-1985). Some of these changes are as follows:

- 1904 Separate property rights were conferred on women.
- 1928 Women who owned property which had a certain financial value were enfranchised for the first time.
- 1945 Women were eligible to sit in the Legislative Council.
- 1953 Universal Adult Suffrage was granted to men and women, 21 years and over.
- 1961 Women were eligible for jury service.
- 1976 Presentation in Parliament of a State Paper on Equality for Women.
- 1980 Enshrinement of the principle of equality for women under Article 29 of the 1980 Constitution of the Co-operative Republic of Guyana.
- 1980 Signing and ratification of the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women.

22. Special measures were taken to accelerate the work of voluntary nongovernmental women's organizations in Guyana. In Guyana, there are about forty non-governmental women's organizations and their spheres of activity represent a wide cross section of interests - political, economic, cultural, educational and religious and these were encouraged to come together under an umbrella national non-governmental organization known as the Conference on the Affairs and Status of Women in Guyana (CASWIG). Its membership comprises affiliated non-governmental women's organizations.

23. One of its affiliates, the Women's Revolutionary Socialist Movement (WRSM) is an arm of the governing Party with nationwide branches. One of its guiding principles is that all Guyanese should be guaranteed the opportunity to work for and share in the political, economic and social life of the country. Another affiliate, the Federation of Women's Institutes a rural women's organization also with country wide branches aims at providing women with skills-training in the areas of agriculture, food-processing, catering and handicraft to equip them for income-generation. Many women who have acquired skills through the Women's Institutes have established cottage industries.

24. The Women's Advisory Council of the Trades Union Congress is another affiliate one of whose important objectives is to preserve the rights of women workers and to ensure their protection in the workplace.

25. There is a small group of organizations not affiliated to CASWIG. These include the arms of some political parties.

26. In 1981, the Women's Affairs Bureau was established by Government to co-ordinate, monitor and systematically promote the integration of women in development.

27. At the national level measures have been taken to promote and ensure the full development and advancement of women and enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms by way of the country's constitution.

IMPLEMENTATION OF ARTICLE 1:

28. Article 40 (1) of Chapter III of the 1980 Constitution of the Co-operative Republic of Guyana guarantees to each person in Guyana fundamental rights and freedoms of the individual whatever his race, place of origin, political opinions, colour, creed or sex but subject to respect for the rights and freedoms of others and for the public interest.

29. Guarantees are built into the Constitution to afford protection of all fundamental rights and freedoms of the individual; they are, however, subject to limitations designed to ensure that the enjoyment of such does not prejudice the rights and freedoms of others or the public interest.

IMPLEMENTATION OF ARTICLE 2:

30. The condemnation of discrimination against women in all its forms is supported by the Government of Guyana. The principles of equality of men and women are enshrined in the 1980 Constitution of the Co-operative Republic of Guyana which came into force on the 6th October, 1980. Under Article 29:

Women and men have equal rights and the same legal status in all spheres of political, economic and social life. All forms of discrimination against women on the basis of their sex are illegal. The exercise of women's rights is ensured by according women equal access with men to academic, vocational and professional training, equal opportunities in employment, remuneration and promotion, and in social, political and cultural activity, by special labour and health protection measures for women, by providing conditions enabling mothers to work, and by legal protection and material and moral support for mothers and children, including paid leave and other benefits for mothers and expectant mothers.

31. In 1981 in pursuance of this principle embodied in the Constitution a Committee headed by the first woman to be made a judge in Guyana was established to recommend amendments to the Laws of Guyana to give effect to Article 29 (Equality for Women) and Article 30 (Equality for children born out of wedlock) of the Constitution.

32. The Committee examined the Laws of Guyana for traces of discrimination and also took into consideration recommendations submitted by representatives of women's organizations. The report of the Committee contained recommendations for amendments to twenty-three Acts* and subsidiary legislation* in fifteen areas. The Laws recommended for amendment include those relating to marriage, divorce, maintenance, guardianship and custody of children whether born in wedlock or not and employment of women in factories.

33. A programme of phased legislation has been worked out for implementation of these recommendations over the next few years. Specific acts have been identified to be dealt with on a priority basis.

34. This programme is being monitored by a special Committee established by Government under the aegis of the Women's affairs Bureau, the governmental mechanism for the integration of women in development.

35. The State Paper on Equality for Women which was presented in Parliament in January 1976 by the late President of the Co-operative Republic of Guyana, Cde Linden F.S. Burnham, O.E., S.C., then Prime Minister, listed a number of areas within the Laws of Guyana that still showed traces of discrimination in terms of conditions for

* See Appendix I

working women.

36. This State Paper predates the adoption of the Convention but coincides with and is an expansion of article I of Part I of the Convention. article 29 of Chapter II of the Constitution reinforces the State Paper.

37. Article 29 of the Constitution provides for equality between the sexes. The government, to give effect to this principle, has enacted certain bills in Parliament and has amended laws of Guyana which discriminated against women.

38. Again, under Section 7 (I) of the Constitution of the Co-operative Republic of Guyana Act 1980 existing laws shall continue in force as if made in pursuance of the Constitution but shall be constructed with such modifications, adaptations, qualifications and exemptions as may be necessary to bring them into conformity with the Act. It must be pointed out also that, existing laws include the common law as well.

39. With regard to discriminatory customs and practices, it is difficult to institute legislation to ensure their removal. The religious, social and sociological mores of the people do not necessarily reflect overt signs of discrimination that in any way contravene legislation. The discrimination is often more subtle and fosters reluctance to participate in certain areas of activity which have always been dominated by men. Changes in attitudes are heavily dependent on a number of factors that cannot be controlled. Much must be done by influential groups, the education system and other Government Agencies to institute the kinds of social changes in beliefs that will permit people to reassess their attitudes and encourage mental adaptation to complete equality.

40. The Constitution proclaims equal rights for women and these are guaranteed by various Articles which also provide protection in instances of discrimination.

41. Reciprocally national penal provisions are usually dispensed without discrimination against either sex. If there are traces of discrimination still existing in this respect it is in favour of women.

42. Under Article 42 (I) of the Constitution both male and female citizens can transmit their citizenship to their spouses.

43. Under Section 4 of the Guyana Citizenship Act, Chapter 14:01 transmission of citizenship is not automatic but depends on the application of a person and certain criteria have to be met. The granting of citizenship is also subject to the discretion of the Minister.

44. Since both male and female citizens can transmit their citizenship to their spouses there is no discrimination against any citizen due to his or her sex. To grant to her husband citizenship a woman has to voluntarily make an application to the Minister; therefore, in this way her husband's citizenship is not forced upon her or her citizenship is not changed automatically.

45. Women have equal rights with men with respect to the nationality of their children. Under Article 44 of Chapter IV of 1980 Constitution of the Co-operative Republic of Guyana a child born outside Guyana after the commencement of this Constitution becomes a citizen at the date of his birth if at that date his father or his mother is a citizen of Guyana.

46. Article 43 of the Constitution states:

Every person born in Guyana after the commencement of this Constitution shall become a citizen of Guyana at the date of his birth:

Provided that a person shall not become a citizen of Guyana by virtue of this Article

if at the time of his birth -

his father or his mother possesses such immunity from suit and legal process as is accorded to an envoy of a foreign sovereign power accredited to Guyana and neither of them is a citizen of Guyana; or

his father or his mother is an enemy alien and the birth occurs in a place then under occupation by the enemy.

IMPLEMENTATION OF ARTICLE 3:

47. The concerns underlying this Article of the Convention centre around women's enjoyment and full participation in the political, social, economic and cultural life of the country as one of their fundamental rights.

48. Article 29 (I) of the Constitution gives the State's position on Equality for Women.

49. Women and men have equal rights and the same legal status in all spheres of political, economic and social life. All forms of discrimination against women on the basis of their sex are illegal.

50. As was stated under Implementation of Article 2 of this document, the State Paper on Equality of Women (1976) identified measures to be taken to remove discriminatory laws against women, and these are now being passed through the National Assembly in phases.

51. Certain appropriate measures have been taken at various levels to indicate Government's intent to give meaning to Article 29 of the Constitution. At the Governmental level, administrative measures have been taken to ensure, employment of women in areas which were hitherto denied them, in some cases due to their - sex or marital status. For example:

- (1) Married women are eligible for recruitment, to permanent pensionable positions in the Public Service, on the same basis as men - effected in 1977.
- (2) Women are also eligible for employment in the Postal Service and for entry into institutions which were previously male-oriented effected in 1977.

52. In the military and para-military organization parity was given to the employment of women.

1953 - the State Police Force
 1966 - the Guyana Defence Force
 1972 - the Guyana National Service
 1976 - the Guyana People's Militia

53. When all educational institutions became co-educational in 1976, all Apprenticeship Schemes, and Technical and Vocational Institutions opened their programmes to women and young girls. It must be noted that restrictions had not been placed on women's participation at some of these institutions, but customs and practice militated against their seeking access to technical and vocational institutions.

54. Prior to the advent of free education and co-education in 1976, special measures were taken to accord women accessibility to vocational and technical schools and to ensure their attendance at institutions to which they were not denied access, but at which they were not attending for one reason or another.

Guyana Industrial Training Centre
 Government Technical Institute

-1968

Georgetown	-1969
Guyana Sugar Corporation/Trade School	-1974
Guyana National Engineering Corporation Apprenticeship Training School	- 1977
Guyana School of Agriculture	- 1976
Guyana Mining Enterprise (Trade School)	- 1979

- The removal of the discriminatory qualification against women in relation to Pension rights from the Guyana Sugar and Trading Enterprises Pension Scheme (STEPS) for employees of the Guyana Sugar Corporation. Before 1978 - Workers in the pensionable categories became eligible for membership as follows:

(i) At 21 years together with a minimum of 3 years adult service for males, and 5 years adult service for females.

(ii) At the age of 27 years (automatically) for males and females.

55. Since January 1, 1978, condition (i) above has been amended to read "At age 21 years together with a minimum of 3 years adult service (for both males and females)".

56. In addition with respect to remuneration in the sugar industry, before 1976, a difference existed only in respect of unskilled time-rated workers, where males enjoyed a higher rate of pay than females. Since 1976, this has changed.

57. In the area of training for young men and women at the apprenticeship level, prior to 1974, girls were not admitted to the apprenticeship Training Centre of the Guyana Sugar Corporation which was established in 1968.

58. With the nationalisation of expatriate companies, Guyana Mining Enterprise (GUYMINE) formerly Demerara Bauxite Company Limited, training at the Trade School became accessible to young girls, who gained entry for the first time in 1979.

59. Non-Governmental Organizations have championed the cause of women over the years and by their actions have been able to draw attention to areas of discrimination.

60. These Organizations are involved in programmes of training in traditional and non-traditional fields that provide an economic base and enable women to cope with economic and social changes in society. Special orientation sessions are organized to prepare and equip women for entry to work in non-traditional fields, for example, employment in National Guard Service, an institution responsible for the security of State buildings.

61. With respect to the overall guarantees of Article 3 of the Convention it can be said that:

POLITICALLY - Women in Guyana are free to associate with and canvass for political parties of their choice. Women hold senior positions in main political parties in Guyana.

SOCIALLY - Women are oriented to social change through the efforts of Governmental and non-Governmental Agencies that provide consciousness - raising and family life education programmes.

ECONOMICALLY - Access to employment for women on equal basis with men has provided them with an economic base that does not necessitate complete reliance and dependence on a male counterpart. There are many areas in which women can now seek employment or self-employment some of which were hitherto denied them or in which their participation was minimal.

CULTURALLY - Wider access to education has allowed women to be able to take a greater part and interest in the cultural life of the nation. It has also allowed women to discover latent talents in the performing and creative arts. These factors give reality to Article 40 of the Constitution which guarantees to each person fundamental rights and freedoms whatever his/her race, place of origin, political opinions, colour, creed or sex, but subject to the respect for the rights and freedoms of others and for public interest.

62. Some appropriate administrative and legal measures have been taken to give meaning to Articles embodied in the Constitution, there are still some areas to be addressed.

63. It is vital also that women be given appropriate preparation for participation in all aspects of national development. This preparation should be the responsibility of all agencies, governmental and non-governmental.

64. The Women's Affairs Bureau is working with the State Planning Commission and other sectoral agencies and the Regional Democratic Councils to formulate a National Plan and Regional Plans to increase women's participation in development programmes at the Regional and National levels.

IMPLEMENTATION OF ARTICLE 4:

65. As stated under Implementation of Article 3 of the Convention, the Government of Guyana has taken legislative measures to redefine policies and give support to organizations which function in the interest of women to accelerate their integration in development. However, measures have been instituted to accelerate de facto equality. Special training Programmes have been started by women's organization with support from Government to equip women with skills that can be absorbed in the job market. Special emphasis has been placed on providing women with skills in non-traditional fields such as masonry, carpentry upholstery and as drivers so as to fill vacancies that exist in public or private institutions and companies.

66. Women are prepared for employment in income generating projects through training programmes which have special components and facilities to foster their participation. Learnt skills or undeveloped skills in areas of craft and food processing are also developed with the aim of augmenting the income of women in the home thereby creating a greater element of economic independence. Government Agencies support women's ventures by providing special training facilities and programmes in craft, food processing and agricultural production. marketing facilities and technical assistance is also provided to enhance the viability of the income earning programmes which result from such training.

67. Government's policy is that women should not be dismissed from their jobs nor should they lose benefits because of pregnancies. In addition, through the government Social Security Programmes such as the National Insurance Scheme and Medical Scheme offered by public corporations and private businesses, women benefit from maternity leave with pay.

68. Women who are self-employed also contribute to this Scheme.

69. The National Insurance Scheme came into being by an Act of Parliament cited as the National Insurance and Social Security Act 1969, and became operational in January, 1970.

70. It is clear that much more is needed in terms of supportive services countrywide in the form of day care and recuperation facilities. In 1973, Government established by an Act of Parliament, the Advisory Committee on Women's Affairs (ACWA) as the legal arm of the Council on the Affairs and Status of Women in Guyana. The members of this

Committee were empowered. to visit places at which women were employed to check on their conditions of work and to report to the Ministry of Labour for action to be taken where such conditions are not of the required standard.

IMPLEMENTATION OF ARTICLE 5:

71. Article 5 of the Convention urges that appropriate steps be taken to modify social and cultural patterns of conduct of men and women based on notions of the inferiority of either sex.

72. School curricula do not permit sex-stereotyping and with the implementation of a policy of free and co-education from Nursery to University level in 1976, both males and females in all educational institutions are encouraged to view each other as co-worker and partner. Through lectures and symposia they are guided in their associations with the opposite sex and are encouraged to show regard for one another. Lecturers from women's organizations complement the work done in schools. Women and men are encouraged to inculcate in boys and girls desirable attitudes toward parental responsibility.

73. Article 27 of the Constitution entitles every young person the right to ideological, social, cultural and vocational development and to the socialist order of society. Young people are exposed to courses on leadership development and are free to join youth groups that represent diverse political, social, cultural and religious persuasions. These help to prepare them to assume civic and social responsibilities as they grow older.

74. Safeguard and protection for children are incorporated in the Constitution of Guyana in Article 30.

Children born out of wedlock are entitled to the legal rights and legal status as are enjoyed by children born in wedlock. All forms of discrimination against children on the basis of their being born out of wedlock are illegal.

75. There is still need for an intensification of programmes to ensure the achievement of elimination of prejudices, customs and practices which are based on the inferiority or superiority of either sex. These prejudices are rooted in tradition, religious and social systems and will only be removed by persistent education.

76. In the area of family life, tradition has put the stamp of responsibility for children's upbringing on the mother. Intensified family life education programmes are being conducted throughout the country to educate and encourage present day and future fathers to carry out the responsibility of their roles in the home and the family.

IMPLEMENTATION OF ARTICLE 6:

77. While prostitution in Guyana is not a major problem the view is held that it arises out of an economic need and therefore the Guyana Government must spearhead initiatives to erase the cause and provide preventative measures that would minimise the need.

78. Efforts are being made to prevent women being lured into prostitution through a variety of educational and training opportunities afforded them. In recent years also, there is greater recognition by society of the value of women and the contribution they can make in the context of nation building.

79. The complementarity of the work of Government Agencies and women's organizations has resulted in facilities to help women augment their income through -

1. increased access to education and training in non-traditional skills;

2. increased opportunities for earning income due to the diversification of the economy and the efforts of non-governmental organization in this direction.
3. increased opportunities for employment.

IMPLEMENTATION OF ARTICLE 7:

80. Women's involvement in the political and public life of the country on equal terms with men was reflected in their participation in a massive mobilisation effort organized as part of the nationalistic struggle which culminated in the first general elections held under universal adult suffrage in 1953. At these elections women for the first time in large numbers exercised their right to vote giving greater impact to universal adult suffrage.

81. Since that time women have continued to exercise their right to vote at national elections and referenda. They have equal rights in terms of eligibility for election to all public elected bodies, councils and committees.

82. This eligibility extends to policy making bodies such as:

- the National Parliament
- the Regional Democratic Councils - the regional body which governs each of the ten regions
- the Trades Union Congress
- other religious, social and cultural organizations found at national, regional or district levels
- statutory government bodies and agencies
- statutory government bodies and agencies.

83. Women's representation affords them the opportunity to be integrally involved in the decision making process by virtue of the offices they hold as Government Ministers, Parliamentary Secretaries, Permanent Secretaries, Senior Officials of the government apparatus at the level of Government Departments and the State Corporations and Municipalities.

STATISTICS IN THIS AREA INDICATE

Permanent Secretaries

1981 - There were two women permanent secretaries in 1981

Magistrates

1981 - Women represented 3 of 23 or 13%

1982 - Women represented 4 of 25 or 16%

Judges

1981 - Women represented 1 of 17 or 5.9%

In 1981, the number of women Ministers in the Government were 3 out of 24 or 12.5% and there were no female Vice Presidents.

In 1981, of 65 members of Parliament 17 or 26.2% were women.

In 1981, of 10 Regional Democratic Councils women represented 19%.

In 1981, of 10 Chairmen of the Regional Democratic Councils none were women.

In 1981, on the National Congress of Local Democratic organs, women represented 20%.

In 1981, of 5 Mayors of Towns of Guyana, women represented 2 or 40%.

In 1981, of 6 Deputy Mayors of Towns, women represented 3 or 50%.

84. Women are represented on all Governmental Boards, Corporations and Councils. In addition, women are represented at the governmental and non-governmental levels on all Sub-Committees of the Economic and Social Council of the State Planning Commission which is the national institution responsible for co-ordination of and monitoring the national and sectoral development programmes.

85. Women participate actively in non-governmental organizations and associations concerned with public and political life of the country.

86. Owing to the lack of statistical information on women's participation in public life, the Women's Affairs Bureau has put in place a special programme to have agencies disaggregate information by sex.

IMPLEMENTATION OF ARTICLE 8:

87. Article 8 stipulates that "State Parties shall take all appropriate measures to ensure to women ...the opportunity to represent their Government at International level and to participate in the work of International Organizations."

88. As stated in Article 7 there is no hindrance to women's participation at the decision making level of the political and civic life of the nation. However, at the international level, women's involvement at certain functional levels does not equate with that of men. Women's involvement at the levels of Ambassadors and/or Counsuls General is regrettably minimal.

89. Notwithstanding this, it is to the credit of our women folk that they have been able to obtain international recognition. This resulted from participation which earned for Guyana membership on the Committee on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. Guyana is currently holding the office of Chairmanship of the Committee.

90. Problems that still hinder more effective participation of women in greater number at the decision making levels as far as Articles 7 and 8 attempt to safeguard are: -

- lack of instrumental competence
- need for consciousness-raising in matters of political importance
- hitherto unequal opportunities for education and training
- child rearing roles and responsibilities
- inadequate exposure to international affairs

91. Leading Women's Organizations and the Women's Affairs Bureau recognise the need to expose women more fully to international affairs and to awaken a deeper interest and sense of involvement. These groups are in the process of taking special initiatives to increase women's participation especially at the international level. In addition it is necessary to emphasise the need for female involvement in the awareness of the various aspects of international affairs within the formal school system. This will enhance preparation of women for representative roles at international levels.

92. Government has provided financial and organizational support to enable women be represented at the major World Conferences sponsored by the United Nations to focus on issues relating to women's role in development as well as International and Regional Conferences sponsored by other intergovernmental agencies and non-Governmental agencies.

IMPLEMENTATION OF ARTICLE 9:

93. On issues pertaining to nationality and women's rights to acquire, change or retain same, the Constitution accords equal rights to women in the area of citizenship. This

means therefore that women have the right to decide to retain or change their nationality irrespective of the husband's nationality or his possible status as an alien. A woman shall not be rendered stateless or forced to automatically acquire her husband's nationality through marriage. Article 45 of the Constitution states:

Any person who, after the commencement of this Constitution, marries a person who is or becomes a citizen of Guyana shall be entitled, upon making application in such manner and taking such oath of allegiance as may be prescribed, to be registered as a citizen of Guyana.

94. With respect to equality of men and women with regard to citizenship in relation to children, the State's position is unequivocally stated in Article 44 of the Constitution, and it upholds the woman's right with respect to determination of citizenship for her children.

Article 44:

A person born outside of Guyana after the commencement of this Constitution shall become a citizen of Guyana at the date of his birth if at that date his father or mother is a citizen of Guyana otherwise than by virtue of this article.

IMPLEMENTATION OF ARTICLE 10:

95. The Guyana Government is committed to a policy of equality of opportunity that allows each individual to develop his/her potential to the fullest. Government recognises that the role of education is vital to the realisation of every individual having access to the resources of the country.

96. The policy is emphasised in Article 27 of the Constitution of Guyana which states "Every citizen has the right to free education from nursery to university as well as at non-formal places where opportunities are provided for education and training."

97. Government's commitment is reflected in appropriate measures taken to ensure that in education there is no discrimination.

These measures include:

1. Provision of free education at Nursery, Primary, Secondary and University levels - 1976.
2. Co-education in all schools and educational institutions.
3. Study leave with pay for public servants, teachers, staff of Government Agencies and Corporations.
4. Hinterland scholarships to allow indigenous Guyanese in the Hinterland areas the opportunity to obtain secondary and higher education.
5. The provision of educational opportunities at the Nursery, Primary, Secondary and Tertiary levels, including technical and vocational education, teacher training and workers' education.
6. Provision of free basic text and note books at primary and secondary levels.

98. With regard to the issue of curriculum, teaching staff and school facilities, these are available to all students of both sexes in urban and rural areas. Curricula of the formal school system at the Nursery, Primary and Secondary levels reflect the dimensions of:

- (i) the cognitive and affective behavioural patterns desirable for children at those three levels;
 - and ii) the new social values and economic parameters of the socialist framework which reflect the country's goals and aspirations.
99. Curriculum materials in the form of text, supplementary reading and practice materials are produced in a number of subject areas at the Nursery, Primary and Secondary levels for use in all schools in the country. To ensure proper training and orientation for all teachers, workshops and seminars are conducted to facilitate the teaching process and the inculcation of desirable attitudes in students. Adequate school premises, suitable facilities and equipment which facilitate curriculum implementation are provided and maintained for the benefit and use of girls and boys in all communities.
100. Government policy stresses human development and the removal of all forms of discrimination by virtue of sex, race, religion or other factors. Government's concern that stereotyped concepts of the roles of men and women at all levels and in all forms of education should be eradicated, found expression in a policy that all educational institutions must be co-educational. This was effected countrywide in 1976, though many of these institutions were already co-educational. Efforts are being made to ensure that text books, supplementary materials, games, particularly at the Nursery level, and other aspects of the school programmes do not promote sex stereotyping.
101. Access to education is ensured for all from 3 years 9 months, and this applies to schools in urban and rural communities. Children spend two years at this level. At the Primary level education is compulsory from 5 years 9 months and usually lasts for a period of six years. The involvement ratio at this level* is 90:50 (m) and 94:40 (f). Secondary level* education is offered in three environments: general secondary schools, secondary departments of primary schools and community high schools. Secondary level* education is not compulsory and the involvement ratio is considerably lower (53:16) (m) (54:29) (f).
102. Enrolment of girls at the General Secondary level is slightly higher than for boys - 56.2% females, 43.79% males.
103. Examinations at all levels of the education system are the same for all students, and students for these are prepared without preference for either sex. Teachers in schools at all three levels use different types of diagnostic, formative and summative evaluation measures.
104. Promotion to higher grades is based on academic performance on a prescribed internal examination peculiar to each grade, level and school. To move from first level (Primary) to second level (Secondary) education all children 10 - 12 years write a national standard test set by the Test Development Unit of the Ministry of Education, Social Development and Culture. The results of this permit these students to be placed in either General Secondary or Community High School programmes which are offered at Secondary Level.
105. General Secondary Schools prepare students for the Caribbean Examinations Council (CXC) Examination at the General and Basic Proficiency levels and for the London University General Certificate of Education at Ordinary and Advanced levels. These programmes are of 5 and 7 years' duration, and a wide range of Arts and Science subjects as well as Technical and Vocational subjects are offered. Both these certificates provide entry to University, Higher Technical/Vocational Institutions, Teacher Training

* Source of Information - A Digest of Educational Statistics (1981/1982)

Institutions or jobs in public and private enter prises.

106. Those students who follow the Community High School programme, which is more practically oriented, enter for local proficiency examinations set by the Test Development Unit. These examinations provide certification for the job market and depending on their level of performance, some students become eligible for a transfer to the General Secondary Programme.

107. At the level of Higher Education, opportunities are provided for men and women who have the basic entry requirements to pursue degree, diploma and certificate courses of their choice in any of the faculties of the University of Guyana. This allows more people to take advantage of University education without the constraints of economic factors, since education is also free at this level. Male and female employees of the State who are attending University on a fulltime basis are released on full salary.

108. At the University level*, in general, male enrolment out-numbers female enrolment by a ratio of approximately 2:1. In the Faculty of Arts, in 1980/1981 women out-number men (60% (f) and 40% (m)), while in the Faculty of Education surprisingly, female enrolment is 45.45% and male 54.55%.

109. It is encouraging that in the field of Medical Technology female enrolment is 50%, Accountancy 26%, Natural Science 36.5% and Social Science 33.33% demonstrating women's increased involvement in University studies from 1975, when government implemented the progressive scheme of granting leave with pay to civil servants for a period of five years, enabling them to complete a degree programme.

110. Through the establishment of liaison personnel between Women's Organizations, other Agencies and the Ministry of Education, Social Development and Culture, a monitoring mechanism now exists to detect and correct any stereotypical behaviour that might surface.

111. Higher level training schemes for both internal and external training are conducted by the Public Service Ministry. These schemes ensure training in areas where both men and women have the same opportunities to benefit from scholarships, grants and all forms of technical assistance.

112. There is an increase in the number of women who now seek training in non-traditional fields such as Helicopter Pilot Training, Veterinary Medicine, Mechanical and Civil Engineering, Forestry, Textile Management, Computer Science and Accountancy.

113. In the Technical and Vocational fields, there is equal opportunity for both sexes to benefit from this kind of educational opportunity. However, more males than females made use of this opportunity. Technical and vocational education is offered in the Community High School programme and at a higher level at the two Technical Institutes, one Industrial Training Centre, two Training Centres of large Industries - The Bauxite Industry and the Sugar Industry - and at the University of Guyana.

114. The trend in relation to choice of course indicates that female enrolment continues to dominate in, areas like Secretarial Science and Typist/Clerk courses. However, progressively more females are entering the engineering and construction fields. Female trainees are registering for courses such as concrete practice, plumbing, motor vehicle maintenance, welding and accounting.

115. While there are several Home Economics Schools which are integrated into the Secondary School system at all levels, there are two national schools of Home Economics

* Source of Information - Annual Report of Registry, University of Guyana (1981/1982)

and two Institutions for training in Agriculture.

116. Home Economics Courses no longer prepare females for the traditionally accepted domestic role. Instead the emphasis in the programme is on knowledge and skills which lead directly into professional training as a design for living and as preparation for the world of work. These traditional areas are still basically dominated by females though a few males are now displaying an interest in pursuing these courses.

117. Teacher Training is provided for the Nursery, Primary and Secondary levels at four teacher training institutions. The field of education has always attracted women and a look at staffing in the education system shows that there are more women than men who opt to become teachers.

118. Nevertheless, the top administrative Positions in schools (Headteacher level) particularly at Secondary level show an overwhelming disparity in placement in favour of men. Fortunately, in terms of professional administration at the Central Ministry this imbalance is less evident for at this level, female participation is 48%. At the Technical Institutions in earlier times female members of staff taught mainly Secretarial Science Courses, but they are now teaching such courses as plumbing, concreting and bricklaying. Staff composition at the University level in 1981/1982 indicates female lecturers in all Faculties. Overall staffing shows a breakdown of 79.06% (m), 20.94% (f) while there is little disparity between male/female staff composition in the Faculty of Education (51.82% male, 48.28% female).

119. Non-formal education is provided by both Governmental and Non-Governmental Organizations. The programmes undertaken by those Agencies span the gamut of academic, technical, creative craft, leadership, management and nutritional courses. These provide the means whereby women who have had incomplete schooling or are interested in further self-development can continue to improve themselves.

120. For various reasons wastage in the school system occurs more at the Secondary level than at the primary level. Traditionally girls dropped out of the school system after primary level to prepare for the accepted roles as wives and mothers. Happily this practice is no longer the norm and there are positive efforts to have women integrated into national development. Recent figures show a trend towards a smaller percentage of girls dropping out of the system before completing second level education. It has also been noted that a greater number of women than men participate in Adult Education Programmes.

121. The programmes offered by the Adult Education Association, the Department of Extra-Mural Studies along with voluntary organizations give these drop-outs a second chance.

122. One such programme - the Early School Leavers Programme conducted by the Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA) - is a two-year course of basic academic work and training in vocational skills geared to income generation. It is conducted for girls between the ages of 15 and 19 years.

123. Physical Education and Sports form part of the curriculum and/or co-curricular activities of schools at the Nursery, Primary and Secondary levels. Mass games, an aspect of Physical Education, was introduced to male and female students at the Primary and Secondary levels in 1979. It aims at developing discipline and co-operation (consistent with Guyanese principles of co-operativism,) developing awareness, and alertness of mind while celebrating development projects and events of national importance through a co-operative display of dance, calisthenics, music and art.

124. There is a shortage of trained Physical Education teachers, and consequently greater emphasis is placed on sports than on Physical Education. In Institutions, where schools have both the needed personnel and facilities, boys and girls are given the opportunity to

participate in various fields of sports through competitions promoted at the school, district, regional and national levels.

125. Specific educational information to help ensure the health and wellbeing of families is available to women through the Department of Extra-Mural Studies, the Guyana Responsible Parenthood Association (GRPA), Guidance programmes in schools, Women's Organizations, the Press and Radio. The Guyana Responsible Parenthood Association is mainly engaged in training and sensitising women and men to the benefits of family planning and a responsible approach to parenthood through programmes of Family Planning and Guidance. These programmes reach out to distant communities as well as to Schools, Public Corporations, Health Institutions, Health Visitors, Nurses, Midwives, etc.

126. Religious and Social Organizations which provide spiritual, social and economic upliftment for women, also expose them to leadership training and sensitise them to their civic responsibilities.

127. Positive efforts at eliminating discrimination in education are ably supported by school libraries, out-of-school activities and educational broadcast programmes. These all help to promote awareness of the desirability and necessity of boys and girls working together for national development. Nonetheless old habits die hard and some male positions on the inferiority of women still surface in the midst of these positive directions.

IMPLEMENTATION OF ARTICLE 11:

128. Enshrined in the Constitution of the Co-operative Republic of Guyana is the right to work, and the principles of equality of opportunity for all.

Article 22 (1) of the Constitution states that -

Every citizen has the right to work and its free selection in accordance with social requirements and personal qualifications. He has the right to be rewarded according to the nature, quality and quantity of his work.
Women and men have the right to equal pay for equal work.

As was stated before, Article 29 (1) of the Constitution stipulates that -

Women and men have equal rights and the same legal status in all spheres of political, economic, and social life. All forms of discrimination against women on the basis of their sex are illegal.

129. The strategy for improved and increased employment opportunities for women is linked to training and education where every citizen has the right to free education from nursery to university level. Thus through formal and non-formal educational programmes more women have been able to find jobs.

130. Training agencies of Public Corporations have among their intake young women whose selection into their apprenticeship programme is based on the same criteria applicable to young men. However, in the technical field, women's representation is still not adequate in comparison with male intake.

131. According to official records, women's representation in the labour force over the last ten years shows a slight percentage increase of 3.1% from 1977 (26.9%) to (30.0%) in 1980.

132. These records however do not take into account the number of women entrepreneurs who have over the years become self-employed or women who are engaged in cottage industry-type economic activities in their immediate environment, such as agriculture, poultry rearing, craft production, canteen and catering or business activities.

133. At the level of some major nationally owned industrial undertakings, female employment in some sectors has improved, even though there is much more to be done.

134. Statistics which are available for major industries will indicate the positive trend, though it is very small in the industrial sector. This is an area of concern as it is the area of industrial development which commands a higher remuneration. In this regard, the economic empowerment of women is of concern as this has a relationship to their social status.

135. One major industry has been selected, as an example, the Guyana Mining Enterprise, which was nationalised in 1971.

GUYANA MINING ENTERPRISE:

136. Women's participation in the labour force has not been increasing significantly in the technical field:-

137. In the technical field, at the senior management level in 1976, of a total of 218 persons, women represented 34 or 15.6%.

138. In 1978 of a total of 227 staff members, women represented 34 or 15%.

139. However, in the Administrative field at the senior management level, women's participation between 1976 and 1982 was as follows:

In 1976 of 34 staff members, women represented 14 or 41%

In 1978 of 29 staff members, women represented 10 or 34.5%

In 1982 of 42 staff members, women represented 20 or 47.6%

MIDDLE MANAGEMENT:

Technical

In 1976 of a total of 555 staff members, women represented 30 or 5.4%

In 1978 of a total of 645, women represented 45 or 7%.

In 1982 of a total of 593, women represented 42 or 7%

Women's participation has been increasing, but at a slow rate.

INDUSTRIAL SECTOR:

140. In the industrial sector, there was marked progress from 1977 to 1982, which was encouraging, bearing in mind women's low skill level in this field.

In 1977 of a total of 5,035 employees, 117 were women or 2.3%.

In 1978 of a total of 4,706 employees, 181 were women or 3.8%, an increase of 1.5% over a two-year period.

In 1982 of a total of 4,904 employees, 300 or 6.1% were women, an increase of 3.8% over a five-year period.

141. Overall from 1977-1982, women's participation and employment levels in the industry increased from 9.3% in 1977 to 15.1 in 1982.

142. There is a need to have a more systematic monitoring mechanism of women's progress in non-traditional fields, and to create a link with the educational system, at the formal and non-formal levels, in a more structured fashion, to ensure that women acquire technical and vocational skills.

143. Governmental and non-governmental agencies providing non-formal education, play a pivotal role in supporting the formal education system by designing and fashioning linkages between education and work. This becomes even more necessary now with the country's main thrust in agriculture, particularly where emphasis is centred on production of non-traditional agricultural commodities for local consumption and for export.

144. One implication of this policy is the deployment of human resources from the non-productive sectors into those areas that emphasise agro-based industries. As a result short term training and re-training in relevant skills to meet the new needs fall within the ambit of governmental and non-governmental agencies providing non-formal education.

145. Evidence of this type of training is seen in the style of operation of the Adult Education Association and the Department of Extra-Mural Studies of the University of Guyana. They can best be described as 'broker' institutions. For example, in response to requests from communities where fishing is an important industry, the Adult Education Association conducts classes in fish preservation, packaging and preparation.

146. Women's organizations through their own initiatives have organized training programmes in areas such as textile designing and tie-dyeing, weaving, development of handicraft, craft skills using indigenous materials, garment manufacturing, food processing, catering and upholstery. In addition, training programmes have been organized in non-traditional areas such as brick-laying, carpentry, tableware manufacturing, mat making from indigenous materials, bandage making and production of recycled paper.

147. These skills-training programmes have enabled women to transform the potential of traditional skills into income earning possibilities. This has led to the development of supportive training programmes in costing, budgeting and project preparation, implementation and project management training courses.

148. Among the organizations which have organized skills-training programmes to provide women with income earning options are the Women's Revolutionary Socialist Movement, the Conference on the Affairs and Status of Women in Guyana, the Guyana Federation of Women's Institutes and the Young Women's Christian Association.

149. Among some of the projects established by the Women's Revolutionary Socialist Movement are Garment Manufacturing Centres, Textile Designing and tie-dye production centres, mat-making and bandage making production units and a paper recycling plant project. The largest project which has been planned by a women's organization is a seven million dollar table ware factory, spearheaded by the Women's Revolutionary Socialist Movement.

150. The Conference on the Affairs and Status of Women in Guyana has established a Garment Factory and a Canteen and Catering Project. This organization also has responsibility for the training of female recruits for the National Guard Service.

151. Technical support and funding have been secured for some of these projects from agencies such as UNESCO, UNICEF and the United Nations Fund for Women (UNIFEM).

152. With regard to Social Security, the National Insurance Act Chapter 36:01 provides for social security for all workers. Under this Scheme the following are benefits provided

- (i) Old age - periodical to payments to an insured person who has reached sixty-five years;
- (ii) Invalidity benefit payments to an insured person rendered permanently

incapable of work otherwise than as a result of employment injury;

- (iii) Survivor's benefit - periodical payments in respect of an insured person who dies and who immediately before death was receiving old age benefit or invalidity benefit or in respect of an insured person who dies otherwise than as a result of employment injury;
- (iv) Sickness benefit is periodical payments to an insured person rendered temporarily incapable of work otherwise than as a result of employment injury;
- (v) Maternity leave - women are eligible for 13 weeks' maternity leave, six weeks of which could be taken before confinement;
- (vi) Funeral benefit payment on death of an insured person or of a person in such relationship to an insured person as may be prescribed.

153. The Holiday with Pay Act Chapter 99:02 provides for the grant of leave on an annual basis. In addition, separate service agreements provide for extended leave with pay and leave passage assistance relative to specific years of service.

154. The Factories Act Chapter 95:02 legislates on a number of areas as regards health and safety - Recent recommendations for minor amendments and additions include:

- (i) protection of children undergoing work-study in factories;
- (ii) the prescription of maximum weight to be carried by women;
- (iii) the use of dangerous substances in factories, the use of wave-energy, the use of protective wear, conditions to be observed in driving operations;
- (iv) prescribing arrangements for ensuring the safety and absence of risk of health in connection with the use, storage, handling and transport of articles and substances;
- (v) institutionalisation of safety councils at the work place.

155. There is no discrimination against women because of their marital status. Women are dismissed because of marriage or maternity. Women enjoy maternity leave with pay since they benefit from the National Insurance Scheme. They become eligible for maternity benefits after making given number of contributions. Once they fulfil these requirements women become entitled to thirteen weeks of leave for purposes of maternity and confinement. Women do not lose service for maternity reasons. Paid leave is granted by a Company, Ministry or Agency. The worker then receives from the National Insurance Scheme the difference between the worker's normal salary and the amount covered by the Company, Ministry or Agency.

156. Collective Labour Agreements as well as the Maternity Regulations under the National Insurance Act offer an added protection for pregnant women. During pregnancy women doing jobs which may impose severe strain on their health, such as certain farm jobs, and others in the mechanical departments are given lighter duties consistent with their physical condition. Based on recommendations from medical practitioners, it has been the norm for employing agencies to place pregnant women in areas that do not over-tax their health.

157. With the increasing number of working mothers, Government has attempted to provide supportive social services for the care of young children. It is, however, accepted by both governmental and non-governmental agencies and organizations that there is need for more supportive social services.

158. As a consequence, the Department of Extra-Mural Studies of the University of Guyana is now conducting a survey of all day care centres in order to ascertain needs and priorities. This assessment of needs is a pre-requisite for improving and increasing

supportive social services.

159. Conscious of the need to monitor and evaluate even the changes that are made in the interest of women and of the need to continue to examine the laws and social conditions as they affect women, the Women's Affairs Bureau has seen fit to establish a Legal Affairs Committee which advises the Bureau.

160. As identified in Articles 2 and 3, the laws which restrict employment of women in some areas will be changed (during the course of this year). Those laws have been identified (and appended) and Draft Legislation has been prepared. Cognisance is taken of the need for periodic reviews to be made of protective legislation related to matters covered in this Article. This will ensure that appropriate changes can be made in response to technological scientific advances.

161. It seems, however, that although there is no sex discrimination in education or in job opportunities most of our young women appear to lack what is defined as instrumental competence, that attribute which is characterised as socially responsible, achievement-oriented, independence and purposiveness. Consequently, even though there has been an increase in the number women employed, they tend to be assigned to lower and middle-level tasks, and only a small percentage acquire upper level responsibilities and status. It is obvious therefore, that merely providing women with skills is not enough, mobilising, the productive potential of our women must become the concern of all Agencies. The cultural, social and political environment must also be conducive to facilitate the development of a high level of instrumental competence among our women folk.

IMPLEMENTATION OF ARTICLE 12:

162. There is no discrimination against women in Guyana in respect to health care. The constitution of Guyana (Article 24) stipulates the right of every citizen to free medical attention. Government since Independence through a network of health administration agencies has improved physical and socio-economic accessibility to health care not only by introducing a variety of quantitative and qualitative measures but by stepping up public education so that more people could become aware of available health facilities.

Measures introduced include:

- The construction of a number of health facilities - hospitals, health stations and health posts within all ten (10) Regions of the country. Health Centres in particular, along with maternity clinics attached to the various hospitals are largely concerned with the provision of adequate services and advice to pregnant mothers at all stages during and after pregnancy. Such service and advice on care, nutritional requirements and family planning are supplied free by Government.
- The implementation of health, manpower development and training programmes. Programmes have been undertaken to train Community Health Workers to provide primary health care services. A similar type of programme has been carried out by the Responsible Parenthood Association in conjunction with the Ministry of Health in one of the rural areas.
- The compilation of a School Health Book. Because of the recognition of the need for education in all aspects of health, this book has been designed to assist school teachers in helping the child maintain a high standard of health.
- Compulsory immunisation through the Maternal and Child Care Unit. Immunization of mothers during pregnancy has been an ongoing activity. The Unit from its inception, has been providing free cost of care, advice and counselling for rural areas throughout Guyana. It gives valuable support to the

general policies governing the care of women during pregnancy. The immunization of all children prior to entry into nursery schools is a recent stipulation by Government which highlights the importance placed on this aspect of health.

- Efforts to eradicate malnutrition - Clinics have been made available in an effort to control malnutrition among children especially during the first five years of life. The National Food and Nutrition Council which is engaged in nutrition education programmes has been carrying out many surveys to determine the nutritional status of the people of Guyana. One of the outcomes of these surveys is the publication of a booklet giving the requirements for a balanced diet. This booklet is used as a teaching aid at educational institutions and as a source of information by groups and organizations.

163. In addition to these measures, special initiatives have been taken to reduce the possibility of certain imbalances which militate against women and their health. For example, although the laws relating to health protection generally offer adequate protection for women and men equally, a few have been identified (Mining Act: Chapter 65:02, Section 26) for amendment.

164. Another example is the Occupational Health and Safety Unit which has been paying special attention to those factories where women represent the majority of the work force. Its purpose is to identify potential and existing problems in work places and recommend feasible solutions for the reduction of such problems.

Some of the strategies for achieving the above are:

- promoting personal and environmental protection against noise, cotton dust, acid and other chemicals used in industry;
- advocating the benefits of wearing respirators, earplugs, gloves aprons and other protective devices;
- advising management of the appropriate industrial seating accommodation which improves workers' comfort and performance;
- seeking simple ways of reducing boredom resulting from the repetitive nature of their jobs;
- emphasizing the importance of personal hygiene practices.

165. The provisions of health education and health care are not restricted to the Ministry of Health. A number of other agencies - non-governmental, also play a pivotal role in improving health facilities and helping women to become aware of those available.

166. The Women's Affairs Bureau monitors and co-ordinates the work of women's organizations engaged in supportive health programmes. Linkages, therefore, exist among governmental and non-governmental organizations. They engage in programmes that reinforce nutritional education through practical demonstrations on the use of local foods, methods of cooking and food preparation. These organizations also act as pressure groups to ensure that laws and regulations designed for the protection of women are effective and that measures beneficial to women are enforced where necessary.

IMPLEMENTATION OF ARTICLE 13:

167. The Dependents' Pension Scheme became operational in the Public Service from August 1978. Under the scheme women, as contributors, are entitled to the same family benefits as men.

168. All other Government Agencies have contributory Pension Schemes which not only require women to make the same contributions as men, but also to benefit equally.

For example, in some public corporations the married female who is entitled to vacation and incidental travel allowances and whose spouse is not employed by the corporation, gets allowances for both herself and spouse.

169. Family benefits to women and expectant mothers are guaranteed under Article 29 (2) of the Constitution.

170. Women have the right to bank loans, mortgages and other forms of credit, for agricultural and industrial purposes and for housing. They are granted these facilities based on the same criteria used for men viz. security in the form of an Insurance Policy, fixed deposit, transport (in the case of mortgages) and ability to repay.

171. However, it must be noted that because of their relatively lower economic status, access by women to the requisite securities tends to be more difficult. Because of this, some efforts have been made to facilitate women in this regard, for example, in determining women's eligibility for loans, flexibility is exercised by considering as worth self-employment ventures such as craft production, cultivation of kitchen gardens and cottage industries.

172. Women are eligible for loans at all banks where loans are granted for mortgages and other purposes. Efforts are being made to obtain statistics from relevant agencies to assess the implementation of non-discriminatory practices.

173. In the area of sports, facilities for most games are available, but the bias nationally has always been towards all-male sports such as cricket, football, boxing, basketball, cycling. The few sports in which only women participate like netball, ladies basketball, ladies hockey do not attract an appreciable number of participants or spectators.

174. This may have emanated from the fact that prior to 1976 secondary schools which were co-educational placed more emphasis on providing sports facilities for males. In the few girls' secondary schools their impact on sports was only minimal. With the advent of universal co-education, progress has been made in providing sports for females in previously male schools and promoting women's sports in general. However, there is need for improved promotional structures and facilities for women's involvement in sports.

175. As a result, young women who have graduated from the school system tend not to maintain an interest in sports as participants.

176. In order to promote sport generally some employees provide facilities for engaging in recreational activities during working hours. These provisions must be extended considerably if they are to be effective. Some individual employers and trade groupings promote involvement of women in sports through organizations of competitions and granting of leave with pay for their participation at national, regional and international sporting events. These need to be encouraged on a wider scale.

177. The performing arts have been an avenue for high involvement of women. In 1980 of the eighty (80) members of the thirty-two year-old Guyana Music Teachers Association only seven (7) were male, while six (6) of the nine (9) instructors at the National School of Dance were females.

178. Women's ability to exercise these rights and become involved in these activities is, in some cases, hindered by cultural patterns which allow men to dictate to women the nature of the activities which they could pursue.

IMPLEMENTATION OF ARTICLE 14:

179. In 1981, the Government of Guyana put in place the Regional System, a system

of local democracy who is designed to accommodate greater participation in decision-making by all Guyanese as well as to facilitate the development process more equitably throughout the country. This is detailed in Article 71 of the Constitution.

180. Each Regional Democratic Council, the main administrative organ, has Sub-Committees in areas such as Health and Education. Through representation on the Council as well as the Sub-Committees, women have the opportunity to make inputs in development plans and participate in decision-making particularly in areas which affect their welfare.

181. The Women's Affairs Bureau, established in January 1981, and acting as the lead agency in the formulation of national plans and policies relating to the Status of Women, has been engaged in the establishment of Committees for Women's Affairs in the Regions. These Committees are concerned with the involvement of women in continuing education, training, dissemination of information and general improvement of the lot of women.

182. They also serve as a feedback mechanism for the Bureau as well as the Regional Democratic Councils. The Bureau needs to ensure that in the near future Committees are established in all Regions with appropriate communication systems being effected so that the objectives can be achieved. Voluntary Women's Organizations such as Women's Institutes, Church Groups and the Women's Arms of Political Parties have over the years played a crucial part in the development of skills and changing attitudes of rural women. However, their impact has been limited by a variety of factors including the narrow target group for their activities, declining membership in some instances and cultural differences in others.

183. It is still possible though for development at the regional and national levels to be positively influenced, if policy makers at these levels seek to involve these organizations more at the time of planning. Their knowledge and experience could only enhance the development process. This would be realized only when women's contributions, particularly through women's organizations, assume greater credence and attitudes towards their roles and capabilities deviate from the traditional.

184. Self-help and Co-operativism are a way of life in the Co-operative Republic of Guyana. In the late 1960's and early 1970's, through mobilization of Guyanese - mostly women, the Government saved 12 million dollars (G\$12M) in foreign exchange. Self-help activities in the housing sector were fostered by a policy which allowed workers to receive full pay while on work release for construction purposes. At the community level, Voluntary Women's Organizations have been actively engaged in self-help activities particularly in the area of environmental health and sanitation.

185. Rural women were accorded the right to form co-operatives in 1946 and the right to full membership in agricultural co-operatives in 1948. They have since been involved in consumers, canteen and catering co-operatives as well as credit unions. Through increased use of non-formal educational strategies, the participation of rural women in co-operatives could be increased. This would also provide more opportunity for employment and self-employment.

186. There is no legal barrier to participation of women in community activities. Guyana has on record some forty (40) women's organizations of national character - political, social, economic, cultural and/or religious in focus. The majority of citizens providing community services are women.

187. Already in place in each Region are health facilities, educational services, agricultural support systems and social security facilities.

188. The Regional Democratic Councils, which have been institutionalized in all ten

Administrative Regions of Guyana are responsible for formulation of development plans and for administering their own budget. One of their tasks will be to inform all residents of and sensitise them to the available opportunities and services. The Councils are supported by the Women's Affairs Bureau, Voluntary Women's Organizations and Government Agencies which operate in the Region.

189. There is need for more facilities for education and training activities in some Regions. However, the relevant areas of emphasis, population size and distribution as well as economic factors will have to be considered bearing in mind the productive focus of each Region.

190. Women have a legal right to agricultural credit. Due to the Government's emphasis on agriculture, citizens in all regions of the country have access to credit facilities through membership in credit unions and/or from the Regional Branches of the Guyana Co-operative agricultural and Industrial Development Bank (GAIBANK).

191. In the areas of Appropriate Technology, women in Guyana have been pioneers not only at the national level, but also at the international level. Guyana, through the women's arm of the ruling political party was engaged in co-operative programme in Appropriate Technology with UNICEF since 1979.

192. The programme is designed to ensure that women develop skills and expertise in the construction as well as the utilisation of Appropriate Technology devices not only for use in the home but as an income-generating activity, thus providing a means of improving the living conditions of these women and their families. The programme encompasses experimentation with and production of cooking devices such as clay firesides, clay coal-pots, solar dryers and home improvement devices such as wooden trays, clothes hangers and dust pans.

193. There is no barrier to women's acquisition of land once they have the willingness to be involved in agricultural production as Article 18 of the Constitution makes provision for "land to the Tiller". In every Region land selection committees receive and process applications then make allocations without any bias.

IMPLEMENTATION OF ARTICLE 15:

194. As pointed out before, Article 29 of the Constitution provides for equality between the sexes and both men and women can seek redress in the courts whenever their rights are infringed.

195. By the Married Persons (Property) Act, Chapter 45:04, separate property rights were conferred on married women.

196. Under section 7 of the Matrimonial Causes Act, Chapter 45:02, any property which is acquired by or devolves upon a married woman during the period of separation under a judicial decree of separation is not affected by any restraint upon anticipation attached to the enjoyment of property by her.

197. Section 2 of the Law Reform (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act has abolished all restrictions upon anticipation or alienation attaching to the property of a married women contained in any instrument executed after 1st January, 1953, as long as they could not have been similarly attached to the enjoyment of the property of a man.

198. A married women is in the same position as a man regarding her enjoyment and disposition of property.

199. Under the common law, applicable to Guyana the domicile of a husband is communicated to his wife immediately upon the solemnization of the marriage and is

retained by her for the duration of the marriage so that she cannot during the marriage acquire a separate domicile of her own. Under Section 7 (1) of the Constitution of the Co-operative Republic of Guyana Act 1980 the courts will construe the law with a modification to allow married women to acquire domicile in the same way as men from the date of the commencement of the Constitution.

200. Article 148 (1) of the Constitution which provides for the protection of freedom of movement states:

No person shall be deprived of his freedom of movement, that is to say, the right to move freely throughout Guyana, the right to reside in any part of Guyana, the right to enter Guyana, the right to leave Guyana and immunity from expulsion from Guyana.

IMPLEMENTATION OF ARTICLE 16:

201. A man and a woman enjoy the right to enter into marriage by mutual consent providing they are both 18 years or over.

202. Under Section 55 (c) (i) of the Marriage Act, Chapter 45:01, the consent of the parties to accept the other as wife or husband must be clearly expressed.

203. Minors who are not widows or widowers cannot marry unless they receive the consent of a parent, although provision is made for dispensing with the need for consent where such consent cannot be obtained owing to the absence, in-accessibility or disability of the person whose consent is required, and for the substitution of the consent of the High Court for the consent of that person where consent is refused or unreasonably withheld - see sections 31 and 33 of the Marriage Act (Appendix III).

204. Through consenting parties may enter into a marriage contract, custom and practice still permit arranged marriages in some sections of the Guyanese society. This does not necessarily imply that the couple is displeased with their respective partners though sometimes reluctance to comply could create tension within the family structure. A more enlightened approach by succeeding generations is helping to minimize the practice. Nonetheless family life education must be intensified in this direction.

205. Under section 29 of the Marriage Act, the prohibition of marriage between persons who stand in a relationship to each other arising from consanguinity or from affinity applies to men and women.

206. In all domestic matters of common concern, including the location of the home, the wife has a right to be heard.

207. On the issue of divorce, a petition may be presented to the Court either by the husband or wife on the grounds of malicious desertion, adultery, cruelty, insanity and in the case of a wife petitioner a conviction by the husband of rape, sodomy or bestiality.

208. The State endorses the importance of children in the framework of the family and under Article 28 of the Constitution every young person has the right to ideological, social, cultural and vocational development. Sections 2 and 3 of the Maintenance Act, Chapter 45:03, provide for men and women to maintain their children. As was stated before the Maintenance Act has been amended to extend its operation also to children born out of wedlock.

209. Access to family life education is made possible, and through the programme offered men and women are shown the necessity for responsible decisions re the number and spacing of their children. There are no legislative measures that prohibit any person male or female from exercising these rights, but religious practices and the norms of some

segments of society often weave their own nebulous influence on decisions on family planning that are contrary to current conceptions of responsible parenthood.

210. The Infancy Act, Chapter 46:01, was amended to provide for equal rights of guardianship and custody to both the father and the mother of an infant whether born in wedlock or out.

211. The Adoption Act, Chapter 46:04, allows for the establishment of an Adoption Board to make arrangements for the adoption of children. An adoption order may be made authorising the adoption of a child by the mother or father of the child, either alone or jointly with her or his spouse. Restrictions on adoption are not based on the criterion of sex except in the case of female child when the sole applicant is a male, unless the court is satisfied that there are special circumstances which justify the making of an adoption order. Single unmarried women can adopt a child without restrictions.

212. As mentioned before under the 1980 Constitution women have equal access with men to academic, vocational and professional training and equal opportunities in employment, remuneration and promotion.

213. In Guyana, on marriage by custom a woman adopts her husband's surname but there is no legal rule compelling her to do so. Children of a marriage also by custom adopt the surname of their father. A child born out of wedlock adopts the surname of its mother, but it can adopt the surname of its father if he consents for his name to be placed on the birth certificate.

214. With respect to rights governing ownership, acquisition management, administration, enjoyment and disposition of movable and immovable property the position is as stated under implementation of Article 15.

215. Under sections 60 and 62 of the Marriage Act registration of marriage is compulsory.

216. The Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against women was ratified by Guyana on July 17, 1980 and entered into force September 3, 1981 in accordance with Article 27 of the Resolution.

217. This initial report on the legislative, judicial, administrative and other measures adopted by Guyana to give effect to the provisions of the present Convention and on the progress made in this respect is submitted in keeping with Article 18 of the Resolution.

APPENDIX I

LIST OF ACTS RECOMMENDED FOR AMENDMENT BY THE COMMITTEE
ESTABLISHED TO RECOMMEND AMENDMENTS TO THE LAW OF GUYANA TO
GIVE EFFECT TO ARTICLES 29 AND 30 OF THE CONSTITUTION OF THE CO-
OPERATIVE REPUBLIC OF GUYANA

1. Summary Jurisdiction (Magistrates) Act, Chap. 3:05
2. Defamation Act, Chap. 6:03
3. Criminal Law (Procedure) Act, Chap 10:01
4. Insolvency Act, Chap. 12:21
5. Defence Act, Chap. 15:01
6. Pensions Act, Chap. 27:02
7. Pensions (President, Parliamentary and Special Offices) Act, Chap. 27:03
8. Public Officers Widows Act, Chap. 27:07
9. Public Officers (Insurance) Act, Chap. 27:10
10. The Municipal and District Councils Act, Chap. 28:01
11. National Insurance and Social Security Act, Chap. 36:01
12. The New Building Society Act, Chap. 36:21
13. Civil Aviation (Births, Deaths and Missing Persons) Act, Chap. 44:02
14. Marriage Act, Chap. 45:01
15. Matrimonial Causes Act, Chap. 45:02
16. Maintenance Act, Chap. 45:03
17. Married Persons (Property) Act, Chap. 45:04
18. Infancy Act, Chap. 46:01
19. Intoxicating Liquor Licensing Act, Chap. 82:21
20. Exchange Control Act, Chap. 86:01
21. Factories Act, Chap. 95:02
22. Indian Labour Act, Chap. 98:02
23. Employment of Women, Young Persons and Children Act, Chap. 99:01

APPENDIX IISUBSIDIARY LEGISLATION RECOMMENDED FOR AMENDMENT BY THE
COMMITTEE

1. Maintenance Regulations
2. Summary Jurisdiction (Civil Procedure) Rules Chap. 3:05
3. Guyana Citizenship Regulations Chap. 14: 01
4. Education Code Regulations - Chap. 39:01
5. National Library (Management and Control) Regulations
6. National Library (Superannuation) Regulations Chap. 40:01
7. Registration of Births and Deaths Regulations - Chap. 44:01
8. Rules of Court (Matrimonial Causes) - Chap. 45:02
9. Mining Regulations - Chap. 65:01
10. Factories (Health and Welfare) Regulations - Chap. 95:02
11. Minimum Wages (Laundry Employees) Order)
12. Minimum Wages (Employees in Groceries) Order)
13. Minimum Wages (Employees in Hardware Stores) Order) Chap. 98:01
14. Minimum Wages (Employees in Drug Stores) Order)
15. Minimum Wages (Employees in Dry Goods Stores) Order)